



Feinstein: Senate Transportation Bill Authorizes \$17 billion for
Transportation projects in California
May 17, 2005

Washington, DC – The U.S. Senate today passed legislation authorizing \$295 billion for local transportation projects across the nation, including \$17.1 billion for California. It also would enable hybrid vehicles to access high-occupancy lanes in California and other states, and provide for an investigation of predatory tow-truck practices.

Following is a statement by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.):

“Under the transportation bill approved today by the U.S. Senate, California would receive \$17.1 billion which is urgently needed for highway and bridge projects and public transit improvements. While this five-year authorization represents an improvement over previous years, I remain disappointed that Californians are still being asked to give more than they receive in federal transportation dollars.

For every dollar California sends to the federal highway trust fund, it now gets back only 90.5 cents. With this bill, California would get back 92 cents for every dollar by 2009, but we have a long way to go toward parity. It would be extremely unfortunate if the President vetoes it as he has threatened.

The bill also allows hybrid vehicles to access high occupancy vehicle lanes. Without this authorization, California and other States, such as Arizona, Virginia, Colorado, and Georgia would have risked losing their federal highway dollars by implementing their own State laws to allow hybrids to access these lanes. This provision, which is similar to legislation I have introduced in the Senate, will increase traffic mobility and serve as an important incentive to get more hybrids on the road, an innovative solution to reduce our dependence on oil and to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

Additionally, this bill requires the Department of Transportation to conduct an investigation study of predatory towing practices. Currently, tow truck companies act without any local, state or federal regulation. While most are good actors, there are a few that have taken advantage of the lack of regulation to prey on consumers. This has become a serious problem throughout California, and in other areas including Virginia and Arizona. This study will determine the impact of predatory towing practices and propose potential remedies to dealing with them.”

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